

# ENERGY TIDBITS

November 2005

**46% Increase in Natural Gas Costs** are expected this winter compared to last winter for Michigan residential customers. Natural gas is expected to average \$12.30/Mcf this winter compared to \$8.42 last winter. Michigan customers are still paying less than other parts of the country. In New England, natural gas prices for residential customers could go as high as \$20/Mcf. Residential users of heating oil can also anticipate significant bill increases. In March 2005, the average residential price of #2 home heating oil was \$2.00/gallon, excluding the 4% sales tax. As of October 3, 2005, this average has increased to \$2.75/gallon, an increase of 37%. The Michigan Energy Appraisal is available at <http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/mpsc/reports/energy>

**Third Annual Great Lakes Interfaith Energy Conference** will be held on November 3, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm at the University of Detroit/Mercy. Contact [www.miipl.org/conference](http://www.miipl.org/conference)

**Hotel Managers** who want to incorporate energy efficiency into their operations can use a new website from the Alliance to Save Energy. Resources include case studies, practical tips, links to online publications and software programs, and a map that identifies organizations promoting energy efficiency in the tourism sector. More information: [www.ase.org/section/topic/ee\\_hotels/](http://www.ase.org/section/topic/ee_hotels/)

**Energy Super Saturday** will be held on November 5, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm at the Impression 5 Science Museum in Lansing. Fun for kids of all ages. Contact: [www.impression5.org](http://www.impression5.org)

**Electric & Natural Gas Energy Efficiency Programs Report** will be prepared by MPSC staff by Jan. 17, 2006. Following the issuance of the report, the MPSC will hold public hearings to review the report's findings and to develop a consensus on a course of action. The report will include a review of what can be done to achieve gains in energy efficiency, including educational and technical assistance programs, utility rate restructuring, incentive programs, grant and loan programs, or other innovative financing options.

**EEBA Houses That Work Seminars** will take place on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> in Lansing (Lansing Community College) and Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> in Grand Rapids (Watermark Country Club). Information & registration is at: <http://www.eeba.org/housesthatwork/default.htm>. Registration deadline is Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Energy Star Tools**, a two page handout describing software tools designed for commercial building owners and operators, is available by emailing me at [jhsarve@michigan.gov](mailto:jhsarve@michigan.gov).

**Customers of Xcel Energy's Windsource Program** soon will have more to brag about than their environmental ethic. The 29,000 Colorado Windsource participants who now pay as much as \$6 more a month for "green power" soon will pay up to \$10 less than their neighbors who use conventionally generated electricity. Higher natural gas prices are driving this abrupt change.

**One Billion Gallons of Gasoline & Diesel Fuel** has been displaced through the efforts of the Clean Cities initiative. This is enough fuel for 2 million cars a year. This program of the U.S. Department of Energy brings together state energy offices, vehicle manufacturers, fleet owners, and fuel providers to increase the use of alternative fuels and improve fuel efficiency. To find Michigan partners: [www.michigan.gov/energyoffice](http://www.michigan.gov/energyoffice) under Transportation.

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**Feed-in Tariff or "Standard Offer Contract"** could soon be available in Ontario. The program would encourage homeowners, farmers, schools and community co-ops to install renewable energy systems and let them sell power to the grid at a fixed premium. Energy Minister Dwight Duncan has said the program would be limited to smaller projects, typically less than 10 MW, but over time could add thousands of MW's of renewable power to a strained provincial grid being weaned from coal. The Ontario Power Authority will investigate a workable pricing scheme and the Ontario Energy Board will look at connection policies. The approach has been implemented successfully in Europe, allowing countries such as Germany and Spain to add a significant portion of renewable energy to their overall power mix while capturing solar and wind manufacturing opportunities. Most of the 16,600 MW of wind energy in Germany comes from small projects built since 1991. Prince Edward Island has embraced feed-in tariffs, and Oregon, Minnesota and Washington states are moving in that direction.

**Siting Guidelines for Wind Energy Systems** Final Draft # 8 has been posted to the Energy Office web site at [www.michigan.gov/eorenew](http://www.michigan.gov/eorenew). Comments are welcome.

**Saving Energy & Birds**, Audubon's "Lights Out New York" effort is encouraging Big Apple building owners to turn lights down or off above the 40th floor, from midnight to daylight, during spring and fall migrations. Not only will dimming prevent light-mesmerized birds from smashing into skyscrapers -- a similar effort in Chicago saves an estimated 10,000 of our feathered friends a year -- but it'll cut energy use in the bargain. White-throated sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, and yellowthroats are among the avian collision casualties.

**Solar & Wind Charts** showing 475 kW of PV systems and 2,511 kW of wind energy systems installed in Michigan can be found at [www.michigan.gov/eorenew](http://www.michigan.gov/eorenew).

**Improving Energy Efficiency at U.S. Plastics Manufacturing Plants** is a report about energy assessments at the plants of 11 member companies of the Society of the Plastic Industry, Inc. The companies represent a broad cross-section of the industry in size, production processes, and variety of products. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy05osti/37791.pdf>

**Intermediate PV Workshop** will be held on November 5 at the GLREA Center in Dimondale. An Intermediate Wind Workshop will be held on November 19 at the GLREA Center. [www.glrea.org](http://www.glrea.org)

**Drake Landing Solar Community** is an innovative solar energy and storage project at Okotoks, Alberta. For an update go to <http://www.dlsc.ca/photos/index.htm>.



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